

# Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life."—Jesus

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## Editorial

### A Post Convention Sermon

What do you suggest for a text? But as we cannot wait to receive your suggestion, we will get Solomon to cash a sight draft upon that vast treasure of practical wisdom which he deposited for the benefit of mankind, and present you with this: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

The Convention is now another chapter in the history of the Brethren church, and from its delightful fellowship and its stirring enthusiasm we have gone back, each to his point of duty, each to his chosen or his appointed work, some of us, however, with new and added responsibilities, a whole year stretching before us to accomplish the tasks committed to our charge.

First, let us consider that the work before us is of the greatest importance. It concerns the progress of the church, the building up of God's kingdom among men, the salvation of souls, the education of our youth, the replenishing of the ministry, and, as instrumental to all this, the extension of our publishing and missionary enterprises, the success of our schools, the effectual co-operation of all the churches. So that our zeal will have no excuse to languish because its objects are trivial, or unworthy. If we are to neglect anything, certainly it is not any of these things. If we are to go half hearted about any work, certainly it is not any of this work. Here we have the joining together of the weightiest responsibilities with the divinest opportunities. The man whose spirit cannot be roused to highest and mightiest action by such employment as this that he finds at his door, is dull indeed, or dead; insensible and indifferent where an angel would be alert and enthusiastic, a burning and irresistible flame of holy zeal.

Shall we begin then by letting the enthusiasm of the Convention pale, and languish, and die in our souls? We felt there as if we were capable and willing, eager, impatient, to do great things for the Lord. Shall we allow that frame of mind to slip from us?

That is indeed a lamentably deficient spirit which like green wood can only flame when blown upon by some great wind of conventional enthusiasm, and dies down again into pale ashes when the external wind ceases to blow upon it. A man can do nothing great without a great zeal, a zeal, moreover which burns steadily, like a lamp fed with oil. It is precisely this element of perseverance in zeal which inspires and sustains perseverance of effort, driving right on, day after day, week after week, year in and year out, toward the sure accomplishment of the great object.

But this zeal must be according to knowledge. There is plenty of zeal in the lightnings which flash according to their own free will from the clouds, but it is only when this lightning is directed by a controlling intelligence in well defined channels that it accomplishes its world wide usefulness, and becomes a blessing instead of a menace. The zeal of our church can no longer be compared to the irresponsible lightnings, but to the strong and steady current of intelligent, carefully guided co-operative effort, the substantial results of which are multiplying as the years increase. It is this fact which furnishes the individual worker with the greatest incentive for the investment of time and means and energy in the work of the church. He knows that the whole weight of the church's support and sympathy is behind him. Deliberative wisdom has thought out his task for him. He has been given authority to draw upon the moral and material support of the whole church. Only one thing can defeat his efforts, lack of zeal, and lack of perseverance, a weak, discouraged, intermittent, languishing expenditure of energy.

Should not each one of us take to heart the admonition of the text, to do with our might what our hands find to do? Honor demands it of us, for we have freely accepted the tasks imposed upon us by the Convention. It would be a shame to betray the trust and disappoint the expectations of the church. Committees, pastors, permanent agents of the Convention, have assumed obligations with regard to the publishing interests, the educational interests, the missionary interests of the church, which cannot be neglected without personal dishonor. This consideration alone should spur us to a continuity of mightiest effort.

Our interests are involved, for, not to have all I can have, but to be the best that I can be, and to do the best that I can do, represents the highest interest of every man and woman. Let us therefore for three hundred and sixty-five days, do with our might what the Church has given our hand to do, and there will be such a record of achievement going up to the next Convention, that the whole brotherhood will be thrilled with the glorious enthusiasm of it, and we will feel that we have not lived in vain, nor wrought in vain, so abundant will be the fruitage of this unanimous doing with our might, and that for a whole year together, the work that the late Convention has committed to our charge.

This truth comes to us more and more the longer we live, that on what field or with what aims we do our duty matters very little, or even what our duty is, great or small, splendid or obscure. Only to find our duty certainly, and somewhere, somehow do it faithfully, makes us good, strong, happy, useful men, and tunes our lives into some feeble echo of the life of God.—Phillips Brooks.